

To the Housing Committee:

My name is Jody Puccino and I am writing to support HB 6781. I was facing eviction in 2022. I was unable to work my full schedule in August and told the property manager I would be behind on rent but get caught up in September.

I had thought everything was fine until I was served a Notice to Quit at the end of August. I repaid what I owed before the case was filed at the court, but I was still facing an eviction for nonpayment. This made it nearly impossible for me to find housing.

I am a single mother of three children. One of my children has epilepsy and receives SSI. I do not have extra time to look for new housing while taking care of my children and working. I do not have extra income to pay for a security deposit, first month, and last month rent on a new unit.

I feel incredibly lucky to be able to say that I found alternative housing, but it was not an easy process. I looked in and outside of New Haven, and got lucky that I was able to find a place in Wallingford and receive some assistance with my utilities. I am thankful and relieved, but there is still doubt. What happens if my family and I need to move again. Will this nonpayment of rent case haunt me then too?

Finding this place took dozens of hours looking online, making phone calls, taking tours, and pleading with property owners to accept my application because of an eviction for nonpayment of rent, even though I did pay my rent. I managed to get lucky and find a unit now, but I am scared at what will happen next time. The Connecticut State Assembly needs to take action and provide protections to tenants. Many families like mine are living on the edge of disaster, and I do not want to think how many were not as lucky as mine and could not avoid it. Connecticut tenants need these protections, and the Assembly must act quickly.

Sincerely,

Jody Puccino